



PRESS RELEASE

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MULTIPLE DEFENDANTS IN DRUG DISTRIBUTION ORGANIZATION ARRAIGNED ON NARCOTICS VIOLATIONS

TUCSON, Ariz. – The U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Arizona announced that on January 27, 2005, Sergio Antonio Haro, Lorenia Haro, Carolina Marie Haro, Bernardo Mercado-Sarabia, Salvador Garza-Cardenas, Sara Jane Sainz, and Orlando Gonzalez-Rendon, were arraigned on a 21-count indictment in federal district court. Leonardo Burgos-Valencia, Julio Mario Haro-Verdugo, Heriberto Gonzalez, Jr., moved to continue their arraignments. An eleventh defendant, Leopaldo Gonzalez-Rendon, was arraigned on January 26, 2005.

The charges filed allege that from December 2003 through January 13, 2005, DEA conducted an investigation of an organization crossing large amounts of marijuana and cocaine from Mexico into the U.S. The organization stored it in various locations in the Tucson, Ariz. area, and then transported it elsewhere throughout the U.S. A court authorized wiretap was placed on telephone numbers belonging to Sergio Antonio Haro, a resident of Nogales, Ariz. which indicated that Leonardo Burgos-Valencia, Bernardo Mercado-Sarabia, and others were supplying marijuana and cocaine to Sergio Antonio Haro. Sergio Antonio Haro was responsible for transporting and storing the marijuana and cocaine with the assistance of a large organization, including Jose Beltran-Gomez, Julio Mario Haro-Verdugo, Salvador Garza-Cardenas, Jose De Jesus Gonzales-Castillo, Sara Jane Sainz, Lorenia Haro, Carlos Martinez, Raphael Muñoz-Fuentes, Dimas Fuentes-Vera, Orlando Gonzalez-Rendon, Osiris Omar Peña De La Rocha, Leopoldo Gonzalez-Rendon, Aldo Islava-Rojo,

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George Mares, Caroline Marie Haro, Heriberto Gonzalez. Extended surveillance of these defendants and others confirmed the information taken from the wiretap and led to several seizures of marijuana and cocaine which totaled approximately 11,117 pounds of marijuana and 414 pounds of cocaine.

The criminal indictment was returned by a federal grand jury on January 19, 2005, and charged Leonardo Burgos-Valencia, Sergio Antonio Haro and Bernardo Mercado-Sarabia each with violating Title 21, U.S. Code. Section 848, Continuing Criminal Enterprise; Title 21 U.S. Code Section 846, Conspiracy to Possess with Intent to Distribute Marijuana and/or Cocaine; and Title 21 U.S. Code Section 841(a)(1), Possession with Intent to Distribute Marijuana and/or Cocaine. As set forth in the indictment, the co-defendants are charged with conspiracy and substantive drug charges.

A conviction for a violation of Section 848 carries a minimum mandatory penalty of 20 years and a maximum penalty of life imprisonment, a \$2 million dollar fine or both. A conviction for a violation of Section 846 carries a maximum penalty of life imprisonment and a \$4 million dollar fine. A conviction for a violation of Section 841(a)(1) carries a maximum penalty of life in prison and a \$4 million dollar fine.

A criminal indictment is simply the method by which a person is charged with criminal activity and raises no inference of guilt. An individual is presumed innocent until competent evidence is presented to a jury that establishes guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

The investigation preceding the indictment was conducted by the Drug Enforcement Administration. The prosecution is being handled by David A. Kern, Assistant U.S. Attorney, District of Arizona, Tucson.

CASE NUMBER: CR 05-00125-TUC-DCB (BPV)
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